

Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocation policy

Somerset Council [TEAM NAME]

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Version	Approved to Date	Reviewed on	Notes
1.0	April 2023		

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to outline the detailed activities and working practices for the processing of applications, assessment of housing need and allocation of caravan pitches on Somerset Council owned Gypsy sites.

2. Policy statement

2.1. Somerset Council aim at all times to:

2.1.1. ensure that a fair and equitable system of allocation of caravan pitches is clearly established and followed

2.1.2. ensure that caravan pitches are allocated on the basis of priority need and the sustainability of the caravan site

2.1.3. provide an efficient and helpful service which is responsive and sensitive to the needs of Gypsies and Travellers

2.1.4. acknowledge that Gypsy and Traveller families are a recognised ethnic group and to confirm that sites are provided for their needs

2.1.5. ensure that the council's policies in respect of Equal Opportunities and Customer Care are met.

2.2. The council also recognises that the security and wellbeing of the site and its existing residents is of paramount importance.

3. Making an application

3.1. Applicants can express their wish to be included on the waiting list for a caravan pitch by making contact with the council's designated officer or appointed management contractor at the following address:

Housing Specialist, Allocation of caravan pitches, Somerset Council, Petter's House, Petter's Way, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 1SJ.

Telephone: 0300 123 2224

3.2. Referrals will also be accepted on behalf of the applicant from professional bodies and organisations such as primary care trusts and health providers, social services, education, housing and other relevant parties.

3.3. Anyone can apply for a caravan pitch, however preference will be given where a local connection to Somerset Council can be demonstrated.

- 3.4. We will provide general advice to applicants from outside of the Somerset Council area about the organisations that operate within the area they are residing.
- 3.5. Applicants must provide the names and addresses of two referees, preferably from recent landlords. Applicants may be excluded from inclusion on the waiting list if they are unwilling to provide referees or the references subsequently received give serious grounds for concern.
- 3.6. A visit to the applicant may be undertaken by a Housing Officer to verify the information disclosed on the application form and in order to carry out an assessment of housing need.
- 3.7. Assessment of housing need will be carried as set out in the next section and by using the Pitch Allocation Scoring Sheet (Appendix 1)
- 3.8. Applicants are required to renew their application every 12 months.

4. Housing needs assessment

- 4.1. An assessment of housing need will be carried out based on the information disclosed on the application form and any supporting information provided. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such information.
- 4.2. Eight main factors are considered for assessing housing need, which are:
- Location
 - Family
 - Medical
 - Social
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Compatibility
 - References
- 4.3. Certain aspects of the assessment are subjective, but Somerset Council will endeavour to ensure a fair and equitable approach in all cases.

- 4.4. Caravan pitches will be allocated to the applicant with the highest points score. In the event that two or more applicant's points scores are equal, priority will be given to the applicant that has been on the waiting list the longest time.
- 4.5. Somerset Council's decision in relation to caravan pitch allocation will be final.
- 4.6. In the event that you have a concern or complaint in respect of the processing of your application and/or assessment of housing need you must advise the Somerset Council by means of the council's complaints procedure.

APPENDIX 1

Pitch Allocation Scoring sheet

Applicant's name & Address:

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Factor	Points	Examples and comments	Notes
Location Circle only one level of points	5	Applicants not residing within the Somerset Council area	
	10	Applicants residing on the 'roadside' or on an unauthorised site in the Somerset Council area for less than 1 month (must be verified)	
	15	Applicants residing on the 'roadside' or on an unauthorised site in the Somerset Council area for 1 – 6 months (must be verified)	
	20	Applicants living on the 'roadside' or on an unauthorised site in the Somerset Council area for 6 – 12 months (must be verified)	
	25	Applicants residing on the 'roadside' or on an unauthorised site in the Somerset Council area for more than 12 months (must be verified)	

	30	Applicant currently residing in conventional social housing where the accommodation is becoming unsuitable due to aversion and/or compatibility (must be verified by the landlord, and the applicant must have been resident in conventional housing for less than 12 months)	
	35	Applicant residing on the 'roadside' or an unauthorised site and Somerset Council has accepted a full homeless duty	
Family Circle all the points that apply	5	Pregnancy confirmed by doctor, community nurse or health visitor	
	10	Children between the ages of 10 to 18 or a family member between the ages of 65 to 75 years	
	15	Children under the age of 10 years	
	20	Family member between the ages of 75 to 80 years	
	25	Family member over the age of 80 years	
Medical Circle only one level of points	5	Knowledge of health issues but no referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor	
	10	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to temporary health issues that require care on site	
	15	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to permanent health issues that require care on site	
	20	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to health issues that will require hospital visits for a period of up to 12 months	

	25	Referral from doctor, community nurse or health visitor relating to health issues that will require hospital visits for a period beyond 12 months	
Social Circle only one level of points	5	Knowledge of social needs but no referral from social worker	
	15	Referral from social worker recommending that rehousing on a site will benefit social issues	
	20	Applicant needing to move to give or receive care to a family member already on site (evidence required)	
Employment (including self-employed) Circle only one level of points Evidence required	5	Offered employment within the Somerset Council area	
	10	Existing temporary employment within the Somerset Council area (minimum of six months), or actively working voluntarily in the community	
	20	Existing permanent employment within the Somerset Council area	
Education	25	Any household member in education, including school, special needs, home schooling, college	
References Circle only one level of points Note that a 'good' reference should include comments regarding no breaches of tenancy agreement. It can also include confirmation of active community	Reject	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure to provide any references without valid reasons 2. Poor references relating to anti-social behaviour and/or tenancy or licence fee arrears where the council believes that this is likely to jeopardise the sustainability of any new tenancy and / or the sustainability of the site 3. High probability of conflict with other residents (evidence required) 	

involvement and contribution eg. voluntary work.	0	No references with valid reasons (eg. applicant may have never had a landlord)	
	5	Minimum of 2 character references from non-landlord	
	10	Based on references, no known reason for potential conflict with any existing site residents	
	10	1 fair reference from landlord	
	15	2 fair references from landlord	
	20	1 good reference from landlord	
	25	2 good references from landlord	

Points Total	
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Assessment carried out by:

Date: